**Non-Implementation of Agreements with Postal Employees**

*70. SHRI GAYAN SINGH:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether about six lakh postal employees all over the country had resorted to strike from 9th to 16th July, 1998, mainly for the cause of Extra Departmental employees;

(b) whether the strike was withdrawn on the 16th July, 1998, after a settlement was reached at after long discussion between the representatives of employees' Unions and him;

(c) if so, whether it is a fact that one of the terms of the said settlement have been implemented, so far; and

(d) if so, what are the terms of the agreement made and reasons for not implementing the same, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) to (d) Postal strike during 8-9 to 16th July- 1998 was resorted to by Postal Unions/Associations with an estimated total membership of 3.5 lakhs. The 10 point Charter of Demands submitted by the Federations and their affiliates comprised the following:

(a) Implementation of positive recommendations of Justice Talwar Committee on Postal ED Agents and rejection of all adverse recommendations, (b) improvement of pay scales of Postman grade, (c) implementation of revised formula for Productivity Linked Bonus and payment of additional number of days PLB for the year 1996-97, (d) demands for upgradation of scales of pay for different categories of employees of the Department like Group 'D', Postal Assistant, Accountant, Driver and Workshop staff, Stenographer and JAO, and regularisation of part-time/causal labours and grant of benefits on par with regular employees.

The Postal strike was called of by the Joint Council of Action of postal staff Federations in response to the appeal by the then Minister of Communications during her discussions with the staff representatives and her assurance for sympathetic and expeditious settlement of the issues including implementation of Justice Talwar Committee recommendations.

Issues regarding improvement of pay scales of Postman cadre and implementation of revised formula for Productivity Linked Bonus were decided with the approval of Cabinet and necessary orders in this regard have been issued. Implementation of recommendation of justice Talwar Committee on Postal ED Agents is under active consideration of the Government. In respect of the other demands regarding improvement of pay scales, etc. for different categories of staff in the Department, a Committee chaired by Member (Personnel), Postal Service Board has been set up with officials of the Department and representatives of the two federations of postal employees. The Committee is entrusted with the task of formulating agreed views on the demands so that further appropriate action can be initiated for obtaining necessary orders of the Government. The Committee has held several meetings and its report is expected to be finalised shortly.

**Purchase of Castrators from Foreign Companies**

*71. SHRI CHIMANBHAI HARIBHAI SHUKLA:
SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that various State Animal Husbandary Departments on the recommendation of Central Government are procuring CASTRATORS to castrate scrub bulls, from foreign companies at exorbitant rates;

(b) whether good quality CASTRATORS are being manufactured and offered by Indian manufacturers at highly reasonable prices;

(c) if so, the reasons for purchasing this product from foreign companies in foreign exchange when the product is easily available indigenously at lower rates;

(d) whether Government propose to constitute an enquiry to check unfair protection to foreing companies and order for bulk purchase of CASTRATORS from Indian manufacturers; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme National Bull Production Programme (NBPP) implemented by the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying from 1993-94, State Governments have been advised to procure Burdizzo castrators manufactured in Italy;

(b) to (e) The quality of indigenous castrators has generally been poor. In April 1998, an indigenous manufacturer has approached the Department to get his product tested for quality. Action has been initiated on this request.

**Promotion of Bio-Diversity to Increase Productivity**

72. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Act now to save Indian Agriculture" which appeared in the Asian Age dated the 6th September, 1998;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to promote biodiversity based on small ecological farm agriculture to attain higher productivity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICLTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) India is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity which asserts that countries have rights over their bio-resources. A legislation on Biodiversity for conservation of biological divrsity, the substainable use of its components and the equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological resources is under formulation by the Ministry of Environment & Forests.

A legislation on Plant Variety and Farmers' Rights Protection is under formulation by the Department of Agriculture & Coopration which will provide the framework for protecting the rights of breeders in India as also of farming communities. The main objective of the proposed legislation is to protect Plant Breeders' Rights for development of new variety and right of the farmers for further multiplication or exchange of seed of the protected varieties. The proposed legislation will also have provision for suitable compensation to the farmers or rural communities for conservation and maintenance of on-farm diversity and on-farm innovations. The breeder of the new variety will provide suitable compensation to the person or grup of persons for their contribution in evolution of such variety.

The Government is seized of the problem of introduction of terminator seed and other genetically engineered planting material and all efforts are being made to ensure that such material does not find entry in the country through legal channel.

**Special Central Assistance to Andhra Pradesh**

*73. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested the Planning Commission for sanction of